

BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN  
12TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
APPROPRIATIONS  
SENIOR WHIP

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3012**

168 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-5801

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
850 BEAR TAVERN ROAD, SUITE 201  
EWING, NEW JERSEY 08628  
(609) 883-0026

WEBSITE: WATSONCOLEMAN.HOUSE.GOV

March 14, 2024

Laxman Narasimhan  
Chief Executive Officer  
Starbucks Coffee Company  
2401 Utah Ave. S.  
Seattle, WA 98134

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

I am writing to urge Starbucks to reconsider its current plan to close the Starbucks branch located in Trenton, New Jersey.

Opened in December of 2017, the Trenton Starbucks was the ninth location in Starbucks's Community Store Program.<sup>1</sup> First announced in 2015,<sup>2</sup> the Community Store Program has the stated goal of fostering economic opportunities for underserved communities by providing community spaces and hiring local workers.<sup>3</sup>

In 2020, John Kelly, then Executive Vice President of Public Affairs at Starbucks, stated that you "believe it is [your] role and responsibility to partner with those in the communities [you] serve to help make a positive economic and social impact."<sup>4</sup> In 2022, it was reported that Starbucks intended to expand this concept to 1,000 stores by 2030,<sup>5</sup> and, as recently as 2023, Starbucks touted the Community Store Program, saying that these stores "focus on helping provide economic opportunity in rural and urban communities through local hiring, partnerships with

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://jerseydigs.com/starbucks-opens-new-concept-store-in-downtown-trenton-new-jersey-102-south-warren-street/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://stories.starbucks.com/stories/2015/starbucks-deepens-investments-in-diverse-under-represented-communities/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://stories.starbucks.com/press/2020/starbucks-expands-commitment-in-underserved-communities-across-the-us/>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.restaurantbusinessonline.com/operations/starbucks-plans-expand-its-community-store-concept-1000-locations>

local artists and nonprofits, and intentional dedicated space for communities to come together for events.”<sup>6</sup>

From accounts written even shortly after the store’s opening, the Trenton Starbucks location has been a resounding success, with tangible positive effects on the surrounding community. In a 2017 story, one nearby business owner noted that he had already seen increased foot traffic in the area.<sup>7</sup> 2018 and 2019 articles covered the important community events and worker opportunities offered by the Trenton Starbucks.<sup>8,9</sup> Recent news pieces covering the store’s scheduled closure also highlight the important positive effects the location has had in the six years since its opening.<sup>10,11</sup>

Given the clear and obvious alignment of the Trenton location’s performance with the goals of the Community Store Program, is this closure a signal from Starbucks that you are moving away from your stated commitment to supporting and uplifting underserved communities? By closing the Trenton location, New Jersey would become one of only three states with no Starbucks in their capital city, joining South Dakota and Vermont,<sup>12</sup> and depriving Trenton --- an urban community with a 26.2% poverty rate --- of the opportunity to continue on its path toward economic revitalization.

This Starbucks location has become an important part of downtown Trenton and its community, and I hope that you will reconsider closing it.

I thank you for your time and for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://stories.starbucks.com/stories/2023/starbucks-and-lebron-james-family-foundation-bring-community-together-at-dedication-for-community-store/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://whyy.org/segments/trenton-residents-businesses-welcome-citys-first-starbucks/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nj.com/news/erry-2018/12/a13d60ade5563/one-year-in-downtown-trenton-s.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.trentondaily.com/not-your-typical-starbucks/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nj.com/mercer/2024/03/trenton-starbucks-to-close-in-devastating-blow-to-city-mayor-says.html>

<sup>11</sup> <https://nj1015.com/starbucks-store-closure-trenton-nj/>

<sup>12</sup> Of these three capital cities, Trenton is by far the largest by population. According to the 2020 US Census, Trenton, NJ, had a population of 90,871, while Pierre, SD, had a population at 14,091 and Montpelier, VT, had a population of 8,074.